

14th July 2026

Dear

ATISN 26980 - the former Ness Tar Works site, Caerphilly

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 18th May 2026. You asked for information in relation to the former Ness Tar Works site, Caerphilly, including:

- Details of any Welsh Government funding, grant support, regeneration support or remediation-related financial assistance provided, considered or discussed;
- Copies of any records, reports, briefing notes or assessments held by Welsh Government relating to the site;
- Copies of any correspondence between Welsh Government and other parties about the site;
- Copies of any internal Welsh Government briefing notes, memoranda or recorded discussions regarding the site; and
- Confirmation as to whether Welsh Government has held any version of the Integral Geotechnique "Scoping Site Investigation" dated November 2023 relating to the former Ness Tar Works site, including the date on which any version was first received.

Our response

A copy of the information I have decided to release is enclosed.

I have decided that some of the information requested is exempt from disclosure under section(s) **43(2)** of the **Freedom of Information Act** and is therefore withheld. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full at Annex 1 to this letter.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ 2

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Response

You asked for:

Details of any Welsh Government funding, grant support, regeneration support or remediation-related financial assistance provided, considered or discussed in relation to: the former Ness Tar Works site;

contamination investigation works;

remediation feasibility;

redevelopment viability;

or associated Caerphilly 2035 regeneration proposals.

Our Response

A £20million Loan facility was provided by the Welsh Government to Caerphilly County Borough Council in 2021 to support the site investigations, potential acquisition and redevelopment of the Ness Tar site and other stalled brownfield sites in Caerphilly.

Additional funding totalling £28million was awarded to Caerphilly County Borough Council under the Transforming Towns programme to support regeneration proposals from the Caerphilly 2035 Placemaking Plan, enabling the delivery of projects such as:

- Pentrebane Street Redevelopment;
- Park Lane (Ffos) Market;
- Hotel & Leisure Quarter Designs;
- Cultural Centre Development Phases 1 and 2;
- Coach Pull-In;
- Streets and Open Spaces Public Realm Improvements; and
- Caerphilly Leisure and Wellbeing Centre.

You asked for:

1. Copies of any records, reports, briefing notes or assessments held by Welsh Government relating to the site;

Our response

The following information held by the Welsh Government is available publicly at the website addresses referenced:

*Caerphilly County Borough 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan 2020-2035
Candidate Sites Register - Caerphilly Basin Updated May 2025 (including Ness Tar)*

Available at: caerphilly-basin-cb-eng.aspx

The other records, reports and briefing notes held by Welsh Government are exempt from disclosure under section(s) 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld. 4

You asked for:

1. Copies of any correspondence between Welsh Government and other parties about the site;

Our response

A copy of an email from Caerphilly Council to Welsh Government dated 07/12/2021 is provided below.

Other correspondence is exempt from disclosure under section(s) 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld.

You asked for:

1. Copies of any internal Welsh Government briefing notes, memoranda or recorded discussions regarding the site;

Our response

This information is exempt from disclosure under section(s) 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld.

You asked for:

1. Confirmation as to whether Welsh Government has held any version of the Integral Geotechnique “Scoping Site Investigation” dated November 2023 relating to the former Ness Tar Works site, including the date on which any version was first received.

Our response

No, the Welsh Government does not hold this report 5

Annex 1

Application of exemptions/exceptions

The Freedom of information Act/Environmental Information Regulations provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

I have decided to withhold the following information:

- Copies of records, reports, briefing notes or assessments held by Welsh Government relating to the site;
- Copies of correspondence between Welsh Government and other parties about the site;
- Copies of internal Welsh Government briefing notes, memoranda or recorded discussions regarding the site;

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of section(s) **43(2)** of the **Freedom of Information Act** and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Engagement of section 43(2) Commercial Interest Exemption of the Freedom of Information Act

The Welsh Government believes that **the information listed above** should be exempt from disclosure. **The reason for this is the release of the information would:**

- Affect negotiations regarding the potential purchase of the site;
- Prejudice Welsh Government's funding application assessment process;
- Impact on partners ability to participate competitively in commercial activity;
- Affect the landowners' ability to dispose of the site and the value obtainable.

Public Interest Test

In order to satisfy the public interest test in relation to the exemption(s), it is necessary to conclude that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to *outweigh* the public interest arguments in favour of release.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

Release of the information may:

- Contribute to the public's understanding of the government's operations and decision-making processes.
- Demonstrate transparency and encourage the sharing of information among public authorities and the public.

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Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

Release of the information would:

- Affect negotiations regarding the potential purchase of the site;
- Prejudice Welsh Government's funding application assessment process;
- Impact on partners ability to participate competitively in commercial activity;
- Affect the landowners' ability to dispose of the site and the value obtainable;

Balance of public interest test

It is my opinion that the argument in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to outweigh the public interest arguments in favour of release based on the above factors.